

# India, UK resume talks in bid to clinch free-trade deal

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Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal met his UK counterpart Jonathan Reynolds in London on Friday in an unscheduled resumption of talks as the countries seek to clinch a free trade agreement (FTA) in the shadow of US tariffs.

Goyal returned to London for the talks, a British government spokesperson said, after a two-day visit earlier in the week ended without a final agreement.

Talks between the UK and India on a trade deal started in January 2022, as Britain sought to forge an independent trade policy after leaving the European Union.

After talks were delayed by a churn in British politics — with four different Prime Ministers in office since negotiations began —



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the Labour government that took power last year looked set to clinch a deal imminently.

Separately, both countries are also seeking bilateral deals with the US to remove some tariffs.

The British and Indian governments each said that talks ear-

lier in the week had been constructive. “We have been clear we will only sign a deal that is fair, balanced and ultimately in the best interests of the British people,” a British trade ministry spokesperson said.

Businesses briefed on the outline of a deal on Tuesday said only a few issues remained outstanding, according to sources. Areas such as the reduction of tariffs on whisky and autos had been finalised, they added.

UK and India are also looking to conclude separate treaties on investment and social security, negotiated alongside the FTA.

Under the proposed investment treaty, firms will have protections that allow them to sue either government if they believe policy changes unfairly harm their investments, two sources told *Reuters*.